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ABSTRACT

The role of school librarians has changed as the rapid expansion of information technology during the last decade has placed more emphasis on their participation in the instructional process, and propelled the librarian into a new role as school media specialist. Many media specialists have difficulty in grasping their role in schools. They are pressured to understand state-of-the-art technology and apply that knowledge to instruction and information retrieval, and they find themselves increasingly involved in the instructional development process while they still retain their traditional role as keeper of the books. Media specialists must understand their role in the instructional program and assess the skills required to perform professional duties. This model task list has been developed to: (1) guide media specialists in developing the higher level media services--those services that involve planning with the teacher to facilitate learning; (2) help media specialists to understand their role in the instructional program, to assess their professional performance, and to set goals for improvement; and (3) be used as a tool for performance evaluation and/or as a basis for developing job descriptions for media specialists. Incorporated in this list is a taxonomy of tasks related to curriculum involvement, media center administration, and professional growth. (MES)

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A Model Task List for School Media Specialists

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Iowa Educational Media Association

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FOREWORD

The role of the librarian who once spent the day typing, filing and checking out books has changed. The rapid expansion of information technology during the last decade placed the demands upon instruction in schools, propelling the librarian into a new role as school media specialist.

The transformation from librarian to media specialist and library to media center has not evolved smoothly. Many colleges of education, professional associations, school boards and parents continue to struggle with the role of the media specialist in the educational process.

Many media specialists have difficulty in grasping a concept of their role in schools. They are pressured to understand state-of-the-art technology and apply that knowledge to instruction and information retrieval. Increasingly, they find themselves involved in the instructional development process, while they still retain the traditional role as keeper of books. Media specialists must understand their role in the instructional program and assess the skills required to perform their professional duties. Therefore, the Professional Growth Committee of the Iowa Educational Media Association has developed a model task list to:

1. Guide media specialists in developing the "higher level" media services — those services which involve planning with the teacher to facilitate efficient, effective learning.
2. Help media specialists understand their role in the instructional program, to assess their professional performance and to set goals for improvement.
3. Be used as one tool for performance evaluation of the media specialist, and/or as a basis for developing job descriptions for media specialists.

Incorporated in this list is a taxonomy of tasks related to curriculum based upon the work of Dr. David V. Loertscher.

In his article, "The School Library Media Center, A New Force in American Education," Loertscher discusses the successive stages in the development of the media center. His discussion places the current identity crisis of media specialists and the role of media programs in perspective.

Briefly stated, Loertscher divides the development into two revolutions. The first revolution introduced audiovisual materials as a resource for learning. The multi-media concept — learning from film, transparencies, slides, prints, audio, as well as books — evolved. The first revolution resulted in:

1. Classroom collections merged into a single, central collection.
2. The addition of audiovisual media and equipment as part of the media center.
3. Improved collections.
4. Hiring of professional and clerical staff.

The second revolution involves the media program as part of the curriculum. To Loertscher, the ideal media program is part of the curriculum and the media specialist is an integral part of the teaching team. Certainly not every curricular unit will require use of the media center staff and facilities, but the idea of the media center only as a warehouse for resources is as obsolete as the wire recorder and the box camera. The ideal program combines the first and second revolutions. Loertscher summarizes the role of the media program in the educational process.

> The first revolution (which still is continuing) brought into existence the library media center. This is a central facility in the school which serves as the repository for books, pamphlets, magazines, filmstrips, films, videotapes, videodiscs and computer programs. These materials must be accompanied by equipment and space for use by individuals, small groups and large groups. To build and interpret this collection as a curricular force, there is a professional library media specialist who has technical, clerical and volunteer assistance. This LMC staff performs a wide range of tasks including housekeeping chores, dynamic services and program activities.
>
> The second revolution seeks to take this resource — the LMC — into the heart of the curriculum — to teach educators how to base their learning activities upon the bedrock of media experience. The second revolution seeks to make the collection, the equipment and the staff used — not isolated — not neglected — not like a trophy in a trophy case. The second revolution promotes the concept of instructional development and shows how this can be integrated with traditional LMC services to produce a total program.

MODEL TASK LIST

A. CURRICULUM TAXONOMY

1. NO INVOLVEMENT

The media specialist:

1.1 Assesses whether the media center staff or facilities need to be involved with a unit of instruction.

2. SELF-HELP WAREHOUSE

The media specialist:

2.1 Selects and maintains a collection.

2.2 Plans use of media facilities by allocating space according to the needs of the students, staff, and program.

2.3 Uses a variety of sources to obtain current reviews and information about material and equipment.

2.4 Develops policies and guidelines for storage and retrieval systems.

2.5 Organizes and maintains accurate storage and retrieval systems.

2.6 Organizes and maintains accurate accession and inventory records of materials and equipment.

2.7 Compiles and organizes orders for materials and equipment.

2.8 Supervises receiving and processing of materials for storage and circulation.

2.9 Supervises circulation of materials and equipment.

2.10 Arranges for inspection, maintenance, replacement, and repair of equipment.

3. INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP REFERENCE ASSISTANCE

The media specialist:

3.1 Guides staff and students in the use of reference materials.

3.2 Teaches retrieval skills.

3.3 Provides students and staff with appropriate experiences in reading, listening, and viewing.

4. SPONTANEOUS INTERACTION AND GATHERING

The media specialist:

4.1 Responds positively to spur-of-the-moment requests for materials and assistance.

5. CURSORY PLANNING

The media specialist:

5.1 Recommends alternative media formats.

5.2 Takes advantage of informal situations to offer teachers recommendations of teaching strategies and/or instructional materials.

6. PLANNED GATHERING

The media specialist:

6.1 Meets with staff to identify needs for instructional materials.

6.2 Identifies, in advance, materials appropriate for classroom instruction.

6.3 Prepares selective bibliographies.

7. EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH

The media specialist:

7.1 Plans and provides media in-service.

7.2 Initiates programs to motivate students to read, view, and listen.

7.3 Teaches design and production of media.

7.4 Disseminates results of research related to the media program.

7.5 Plans and implements a public relations program.

7.6 Establishes regular communication channels between the media center and students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the school board.

7.7 Initiates use of media center materials and facilities in spontaneous situations.

8. SCHEDULED PLANNING IN THE SUPPORT ROLE

The media specialist:

8.1 Supports teacher and student goals and objectives by supplying appropriate resources.

8.2 Uses basic principles of instructional design to produce media that meet learning objectives.

8.3 Initiates use of media center materials and facilities in planned situations.

9. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

The media specialist:

9.1 Analyzes learner characteristics.

9.2 Elicits and clarifies objectives of teacher and/or learner.

9.3 Assists in determining instructional content.

9.4 Cooperates with other staff to integrate the teaching of media skills into the curriculum.

9.5 Teaches media skills where appropriate.

9.6 Teaches analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information.

9.7 Shares with the teacher in evaluation of students' progress.

10. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The media specialist:

10.1 Serves on curriculum committees as an information resource for curriculum development.

10.2 Participates in selection and evaluation of instructional materials.

B. ADMINISTRATION

The media specialist:

1.1 Establishes and implements philosophies and goals of the media program.

1.2 Prepares and administers the building media center budget.

1.3 Seeks information about local, state, and federal policies, standards, legislation, regulations, additional funding sources and certification.

1.4 Assesses whether the daily operation of the media center meets program goals.

1.5 Writes job descriptions for the media staff.

1.6 Provides for the training of media staff.

1.7 Supervises and evaluates the performance of media staff.

1.8 Designs facilities and establishes policies for operation of these facilities.

1.9 Adapts space to meet current needs.

1.10 Determines the need for conducting research activities related to the media program.

1.11 Designs and conducts research studies for the development of the media program.

1.12 Develops a plan for evaluating the media program based upon stated objectives according to recognized, accepted standards.

1.13 Cooperates with other media service agencies.

C. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The media specialist:

1.1 Evaluates and identifies areas of personal strength and weakness and seeks improvement of skills and professional performance.

1.2 Participates in district, county, regional, state, and national organizations.

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